(a) the number of post offices functioning in the country at present and the average area and population covered by a post office;

(b) whether any schemes have been formulated by the Government for expansion and modernisation of postal services; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P. V. RANGYYA NAIDU): (a) There are, as on 1.4.91, a total of 148719 post offices functioning in the country. The all-India average with regard to population served per post office and the average area served by a post office, as on 1.4.91, works out to 4607 and 22.10 Sq. Kms. respectively.

(b) and (c). Yes Sir, postal network has been progressively undergoing both expansion and modernisation under the plan programmes. During the current year as on 13.3.92, 998 post offices have been sanctioned. The following measures are envisaged for modernisation of postal infrastructure so as to improve postal services:-

Introduction of mechanised sorting equipment in selected offices, installation of micro-processor based multi-purpose counter machines use of satellite communication for transmission of money orders; and gradual computerisation of postal savings bank and postal life insurance operations.

Excess Billing of Telephones in Cities

3207. SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the complaints of excess billing in several cities including those having services of advanced electronic system; and

(b) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to check the pilferage of telephone calls scope of excess billing and taping of telephones?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Steps taken to check the pilferage of telephone calls are phasing out of old telephone exchanges, provision of Dynamic STD control facility to the customers form Electronic Telephone exchange to lock or unlock their STD/ISD facility alongwith supply of STD/ISD details, provision of detailed billing to the customers in non-digital exchange through Automatic Massage Accounting (AMA) equipment, continurs monitoring of exchange equipment including metering circuit and external plant, computerisation of telephone billing and precautions against unauthorised use.

As regards tapping of telephones, the Department of Telecommunications do not tap the telephonic conversation of subscribers, but only provide technical facilities as and when required by the authorised officers.

Production of Gold

3208. SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT:
SHRIMATI MAHENDRA KUMAR:
SHRIMATI RITA VERMA:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the production of gold during 1991;

(b) the steps taken by the Government during the year to increase the production of gold; and

(c) the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SING YADAV): (a) The indigenous production of gold in the county is anticipated to be 1970 Kgs during 1991–92.

(b) and (c). As the know gold deposits in the country are generally small and of low grade and hence not amenable to economic exploitation, it has not been possible to increase gold production during the year.

T. V. Programme Production Centre at Pune, Maharashtra

3209. SHRI ANNA JOSHI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a growing demand for a separate T. V. programme Production Centre Pune, in Maharashtra;

(b) whether the Government has purchased land and allotted machinery for this purpose; and

(c) the details of the plans for setting up of such a centre there?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (KUMARI GIRIJA VYAS): (a) Government is aware of the demand for setting up of a Studio Centre at Pune, in Maharashtra.

(b) and (c). The scheme "Setting–up of studio Centre in Cultural Centres " under which TV Studio Centre proposed to be established at Pune was reviewed recently in the wake of resource constraint and views expressed by Doordarshan for not expanding TV Studio facilities in the country for the present. It has accordingly been decided not to pursue the project at Pune alongwith similar projects at Ranchi and Madurai. Whereas no land could be procured at Pune for the purpose, part of the equipment procured for the projects is envisaged to be suitably utilised in Doordarshan Network.

Revamping A1 and 1A

3210. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL:
SHRI VISHAWANATH SHASTRI:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have set up a high–level inter–ministerial committee to consider the revamping of Air India and Indian Airlines;

(b) if so, the terms of its reference; and

(c) the time by which the vital report is likely to be submitted?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b). A High Powered Committed under chairmanship of Secretary, Civil Aviation has been set up workout detailed modalities and oversee the implementation of the decision on the restructuring of Air Corporations.

(c) The Committee has already presented its first interim report on legislative measures to the Government.

Development of Elaveezha Poonchira Tourist Centre

3211. SHRI P. C. THOMAS: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Kerala